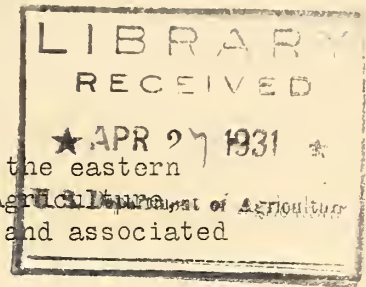


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April 27, 1931.



A series of radio talks by W. R. M. Wharton, chief of the eastern district, Food and Drug Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered Monday mornings at 10 A.M., through WJZ, New York, and associated National Broadcasting Company stations.

Good morning, my radio friends, I am your representative of the Federal Food and Drug Administration. I have talked to you for 51 weeks, telling you how the enforcement of the Federal food and drugs act protects your food and drug supply and telling you how to read labels, in order that you may become careful, exacting, discriminating, and economical buyers.

My read-the-label subject today is bottled mineral waters.

There are many springs and spas throughout the world, the water of which have achieved reputations for certain useful purposes. People go to these springs to take the treatments, which involve drinking the water, baths, rest, diversion, and certain medical and hospital treatments. These combinations often produce beneficial results in conditions for which the climate, the baths, the medical care, the hospital treatment, the rest, and the drinking of large quantities of water, in combination, are beneficial.

Of course, bottled waters consumed away from the springs cannot be expected to accomplish the same results as a sojourn at the springs.

Bottled mineral waters have a proper place in commerce. Some people prefer to use the same kind of drinking water regularly, and are able to avoid changing from day to day while traveling by purchasing their favorite brand of bottled water. Others, when on journeys, prefer bottled waters because they are more certain of their sanitary quality. Certain sick people will consume more water, if it comes from bottles, than they would ordinarily and, where ingestion of large quantities of water is indicated, it is desirable to have bottled spring water available. Then, certain waters are softer than other waters and some people prefer soft waters for drinking. Certain other people, who prefer a carbonated water, can secure this in bottled form. Mineral waters are a source, but by no means an exclusive or necessary source, of some of the minerals essential to proper nutrition. There are also certain waters which have laxative, diuretic, or antacid effects, depending upon the nature of the dissolved constituents. Where such waters are needed, they are available in bottle form.

Now, when this has been said you have the sum and substance of the value of bottled waters, notwithstanding that many other claims are made to further the sale of specific kinds of bottled waters.

Let us see what a mineral water is. A mineral water is a water which contains in solution mineral constituents derived from contact with the earth through which the water has seeped or percolated.

Bottled mineral waters may be classified as:

(1) Lightly mineralized table waters containing only an insignificant amount of dissolved ingredients.

(2) Those in which dolomitic limestone predominates, the limestone being held in the solution by carbon dioxid. These waters are antacid.

(3) The Vichy type in which sodium bicarbonate predominates, known also as the soda type. These are also antacid waters.

(4) Those in which sodium chloride or common salt predominates. These are saline waters and saline waters produce diuretic effects.

(5) Those in which epsom salts, glauber salts, or both, predominate. These are the laxative waters; they are also saline.

(6) The chalybeate, or iron type.

(7) The sulphur type, the pronounced dissolved ingredient of which consists of a form of sulphur.

The amounts of dissolved mineral constituents of mineral waters vary considerably. Chemists of the Food and Drug Administration have found as little as 25 parts per million of dissolved mineral matter, and as much as 20,000 parts per million in commercial mineral waters. Many people who drink bottled waters for their supposed therapeutic effect, lay great stress upon the fact that the water is a natural spring water, a product of old mother nature. Now, read labels. If waters are not natural, the labels will tell you so and, in this connection, you should know that some waters are modified before bottling. Products are added to waters to give them certain effects or to supplement mineral constituents already present. Constituents are taken away from waters - as in the case of waters high in oxide of iron, which is removed before bottling by the settling process. If iron is taken away from a bottled water, the label must tell you this fact. In the case of effervescent water, if the gas is natural to the water, the label will often declare it to be naturally carbonated. If carbon dioxid gas, to carbonate the water, is added, the label must tell you, so that you will not take the gas to be a natural constituent. If the water has been recarbonated with carbon dioxid which has been collected as it escaped when the water emerged from the spring, the label will tell you that natural carbon dioxid gas has been used to recharge or recarbonate the water. If the carbon dioxid comes from other sources than the spring itself, then the label will declare the water to be artificially carbonated, or will state, "carbon dioxid added."

Common salt is sometimes added to table waters to make them more palatable. Epsom or glauber salts, or both, are frequently added to mineral waters to produce or to increase cathartic effects. In all such cases the labels will tell you the waters are reconstituted or reinforced and will name the added ingredients. Some mineral waters are boiled to concentrate

the mineral constituents. These must be labeled to show that they are not natural and that they are artificially concentrated. Some mineral waters are wholly imitation, made by adding mineral constituents to ordinary water. If such waters are sold as mineral waters they must be labeled to show their true character. Certain springs in the United States produce waters which are similar in composition to the waters of Vichy and Carlsbad water, but are properly labeled, for example, Saratoga Vichy and Kentucky Carlsbad.

Many waters are sold on claims that they possess marvelous curative values and frequently, in connection with the merchandising of the products, legendary stories are told about the marvelous curative benefits which were derived by the Indians from drinking the water. This old Indian yarn was ancient sometime ago, but it seems now to be coming back into use, displacing another worn-out gag, which had popularity for a long time. That was the sale of water on the claim that it produced wonderful curative effects because of its lithium content. Such waters were called lithia waters. In practically all instances it would have been necessary for an individual to consume about 500 gallons of so-called lithia water per day in order to get a therapeutic dose of lithium, so small were the quantities of lithium in the lithia waters of yesteryear. This game became very unpopular when your Uncle Sam seized shipments and prosecuted the shippers on the charge of misbranding, so now the old Indian story is coming back. Another is the claim that the product contains radium, or that it possesses curative radio activity, and that therefore it is a panacea for all human ills. Faint traces of radio-activity are found in many waters, but the quantities are so small that they have essentially no effect.

Many cases involving claims of radio-activity and consequent curative value have been successfully prosecuted on the charge that such claims are false and fraudulent and mineral-water-radio-activity exploitation is destined to go the way of the lithia balloon, which burst. A favorite trick in the radium-water racket is to incorporate the word, "radium", in the name of the company, as for example, "The Blank Radium Springs." Don't be misled by claims of radium content or radio-activity, or by the word, "radium", in the name of the spring, because waters positively have no especially beneficial effect because of any radium content or radio-activity.

You will find on some bottled waters labels that purport to give the chemical analysis of the water. Unfortunately, not all chemists report analyses in the same form, which makes the interpretation of a water analysis very confusing to the layman. This morning I have not time to explain to you the method of computing percentages of chemical ingredients in mineral waters from the ambiguous "grains per gallon" statements you will find on the labels. However, I am including such information in the "read the label " excerpt from this talk which you may have upon request.

My final word about bottled waters is this: Do not be misled by claims of medicinal value. There are no waters which will, of themselves, cure kidney disease, dropsy, bright's disease, diabetes, nervous prostration, or any other serious diseases. Therefore, you cannot believe claims to this effect. When you are paying \$1.00 per bottle for mineral water and you

expect to keep paying that for some time, you should secure an expert opinion on that water's value. Perhaps your physician or your State board of health can advise you as to the value of that particular water.

My friends, this is the final talk of the present series. In the 52 talks given, I have discussed a great many classes of foods, and a great many classes of drug products. A total of over 750,000 mimeographed copies of the talks have been sent out in response to requests for them. I have told you how to read labels on a wide variety of canned foods, baking powders, oysters, lard, vinegar, beverage preparations, flavoring extract. I have talked about artificial colors, about vitamins and about botulism. I have discussed obesity cures, fraudulent patent medicines, cathartics. I have told you about milk, cream, butter and cheese, and how to read their labels; about meat and poultry products and how to read labels on them. I have discussed the labels of dried fruits, spices, chocolate products and dessert preparations. My talk today closes the series. Please let me know whether you wish to hear more on the subject.

I am now going to let you in on a secret. The interest in label reading has been so enthusiastic and extensive that the United States Department of Agriculture has decided to issue a printed booklet which will include all of my read-the-label material. I am now preparing this booklet, and I shall include in it a study outline of the Federal Food and Drugs act, and a discussion of the economic and health protective features of this law. The study outline is intended particularly for the women's clubs, the high schools, and the home economics department of colleges. Many such organizations have shown an absorbing interest in this particular activity of your Department of Agriculture.

I wish to express to all of you my very great appreciation of your wonderful support and interest in this work that I have been trying to do in your interest as a representative of the United States Department of Agriculture. My thanks, and those of the Department are especially due to the National Broadcasting Company, and to your local NBC stations. I have expressed to the broadcasting people privately, and I now repeat publicly the appreciation of the Department of Agriculture for the valuable time and broadcasting facilities that they have devoted to this enterprise in educating consumers.

Now, if any of you wish copies of my 52 "read the label" talks, and later on the booklet, send your request to me at 201 Varick Street, New York City.

Good by, and I thank you.